

# City of Seattle Legislative Information Service

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## Resolution Number: 29628

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A RESOLUTION adopting a Permanent Dogs-Off-Leash Program in Seattle and authorizing additional evaluation of some of the new sites not previously evaluated in the Pilot Program in 1996-97, and setting forth principles for developing and managing the inventory of specific sites that will be dedicated to Off-Leash Exercise Areas (OLEAs).

**Date introduced/referred:** September 8, 1997

**Date adopted:** September 22, 1997

**Status:** ADOPTED

**Vote:** 9-0

**Committee:** Business, Economic and Community Development

**Sponsor:** DRAGO

**Index Terms:** ANIMAL-CONTROL, DOMESTIC-ANIMALS, PARKS

### Text

A RESOLUTION adopting a Permanent Dogs-Off-Leash Program in Seattle and authorizing additional evaluation of some of the new sites not previously evaluated in the Pilot Program in 1996-97, and setting forth principles for developing and managing the inventory of specific sites that will be dedicated to Off-Leash Exercise Areas (OLEAs).

WHEREAS, the City of Seattle has been petitioned to extend the current Pilot Off-Leash program (ref. Ordinance 118099) and establish a permanent inventory of sites and facilities where dogs can be exercised off-leash; and

WHEREAS, the Pilot Program provided a factual basis for estimating the environmental effects of off-leash activity at various kinds of sites; and

WHEREAS, the Pilot Program provided a basis for estimating the methods and costs of reducing or eliminating adverse environmental impacts of off-leash areas in various kinds of settings; and

WHEREAS, the Pilot Program allowed an opportunity to monitor public compliance with the terms and conditions established for exercising dogs off leash on Seattle public properties; and

WHEREAS, the Pilot Program also allowed the City an opportunity to implement an agreement with the Citizens for Off Leash Area (COLA) organization and with individual stewards responsible for management of specific off-leash sites, and to verify the contents of an effective agreement with such organizations and individuals; and

WHEREAS, the City's review of conditions as they existed before the Pilot Program began and after it had been in operation for one year indicated that the program was successful at some sites, and less so at others; and

WHEREAS, these results provided the City an opportunity to identify key factors that appear to be necessary for successful off-leash exercise areas; and

WHEREAS, City staff listed these key factors as follows:

Avoid interference with other established uses or department sponsored activities.

Avoid directly abutting residences.

Assure the availability of close parking.

Avoid locating near children's play areas.

Locate where there are minimal impacts upon the total visual character of a park.

Locate where there is low potential for spillover into areas not designated for off-leash use.

Avoid sensitive environmental areas such as wildlife habitats and steep slopes.

Develop clearly marked boundaries and signs explaining the rules of behavior for use of the OLEAs.

Fence sites completely where there are no natural barriers separating OLEA from other areas.

Encourage Animal Control to continue to enforce the scoop and leash laws and;

WHEREAS, the City applied these criteria to its evaluation of additional public properties that might be added to the off-leash inventory in a permanent program, as well as those that had already been involved in the Pilot Program; and

WHEREAS, some of the existing off-leash sites in the Pilot Program and some of the suggested additional sites met the criteria; and

WHEREAS, the addition of new sites will allow more alternatives for users of those sites if any of them have to be closed down for temporary periods or permanently; and

WHEREAS, it is the City Council's intent that additional non-park areas be established and that through the Neighborhood Matching Fund and the Neighborhood Planning Process neighborhoods be empowered to identify and establish additional off-leash areas; and

WHEREAS, the City Council's budget review for the 19987 budget will

include consideration of initial development and ongoing maintenance costs for off-leash areas by DPR, and staffing increases for Animal Control and a Statement of Legislative Intent about Animal Control enforcement; and

WHEREAS, the City completed a SEPA Environmental Checklist covering a total of 21 potential off-leash sites, including 8 that had been involved in the Pilot Program, and the Responsible Official issued a Determination of Nonsignificance (DNS) on August 21, 1997; and

WHEREAS, appeals to the City's Determination of Non-Significance for the permanent dog off-leash exercise areas, issued on August 21, 1997, have been filed with the Hearing Examiner's Office, and the results of the appeals process could have impacts on the content and timing of the City's off-leash area decisions; NOW, THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SEATTLE, THE MAYOR CONCURRING:

Section 1. A permanent program for off-leash use of selected parks and other public properties is hereby established.

Section 2. The program shall initially include four of the original pilot sites as "permanent" sites (Genesee, Westcrest, Golden Gardens and Blue Dog Pond ) that will be reviewed again three years from the date of this resolution, to determine whether they should be further continued under the same or some other conditions. However, as soon as practical, SEPA review shall be conducted for the future expansion of the off-leash area to all of Westcrest Park.

Section 3. The pilot status of Volunteer East will be extended until October 25, 1998, or until another site on Capitol Hill is secured and opened. No later than March 15, 1998, the Department of Parks and Recreation, following consultation with the Office of

Management and Planning and COLA shall submit at least three alternative sites (one of which may include rotation of the Volunteer Park area) to the Council for consideration as a replacement for the Volunteer Park site. After appropriate public hearings and review, the Council will make a final decision on a Capitol Hill site no later than July 30, 1998.

Section 4. The pilot site at Magnuson (water access and boundary walk sites) will continue as an interim site until a plan is adopted for Magnuson Park/Sand Point and a permanent site is located within the park. The archery range site should be considered as a potential site. In addition to a water site at Magnuson Park, a new permanent water site at another location shall be considered.

Section 5. A pilot site at Central Woodland near the north tennis courts will be established immediately and before the existing site at Woodland Park is closed and be evaluated 18 months from implementation as a potential permanent site.

Section 6. The program may include Northacres, City Light Right of Way #3, and ONE of the following: East Duwamish Greenbelt, Jefferson Park Reservoir, or City Light Right of Way #2.

Section 7. In order for a site to be selected as a "new pilot" site, an appropriate neighborhood process must take place, a local "stewardship" committee must be formed under the auspices of COLA, or another appropriate group, and an agreement signed. The performance of each agreement will be periodically monitored as the original (1996-97) pilot sites were, and will be comprehensively reviewed 18 months after initial operation. Sites will be developed as "pilot" sites and will begin operation only after agreement is signed with COLA, or another appropriate group and the stewardship committee.

The physical improvements and management, and eventually even the

funding of these off-leash sites in Seattle parks, will be similar in concept to other special use areas within Seattle park properties, including ballfields, lawn bowling, and boating among others.

Section 8. The initial development cost and annual maintenance cost for the off-leash areas are estimated to be as follows:

Off-leash Sites	Development Cost	Annual Maintenance Cost
Permanent Sites	\$81,000	\$61,000
On-going Pilot Sites	\$22,600	\$28,000
New Pilot Sites	\$97,000	\$76,500

Section 9. Since off-leash areas were not part of the original designs for any of the Seattle park sites listed above, they must be carefully located in those parks to minimize their visual impacts on users of other parts of those parks, and to avoid interference with other established uses there.

Section 10. The agreement that was in force with COLA during the Pilot Program shall be refined and extended to cover the permanent and new pilot sites. No other site will open until an agreement for each is signed with COLA. Specifically, COLA shall obtain legal status as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit entity, and be responsible for implementing its part of the OLEA agreement with the City. City Light or Seattle Public Utilities properties will also require the approval of their respective superintendents.

Section 11. Improvements to and amendments of the City-COLA agreement shall be discussed in periodic meetings between those entities, one of the amendments shall specifically address user or "membership" fees that may be collected by COLA and dedicated to maintenance and operation of the designated OLEA sites.

Section 12. The Superintendent of the Department of Parks and

Recreation shall have authority to temporarily or permanently close, or modify the boundaries within reasonable limits in accordance with the ordinance contained in Council Bill 111869, of any of the OLEA sites for any of the following reasons:

- a. Excessive environmental damage, despite reasonable efforts to limit it;
- b. Failure of COLA to live up to the terms of its agreement with the City;
- c. Public health or safety reasons; and
- d. Serious unanticipated problems affecting neighboring residents or other park users.

Section 13. The Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) will investigate and experiment with alternative types of improvements to provide OLEA sites with recognizable and tasteful boundary delineation, signage, lighting, furnishings, irrigation, amenities for both human and canine users, landscaping, turf (including high-cost but durable new materials), and compile after one year a set of guidelines for such improvements, and discuss them with COLA and other citizen groups.

Section 14. DPR will institute the list of eight mitigating measures outlined on Page 8 (attached) of the Office of Management and Planning's August 21 DNS.

Section 15. The DPR will schedule periodic meetings with COLA, open to the general public, to discuss issues and agree on solutions relating to the OLEAs sites identified in this resolution.

Section 16. COLA shall be requested to search for non-park sites

for OLEAs and is encouraged to develop such sites.

Section 17. The Office of Management and Planning will assist City Council in the consideration of budget increments in the 1998 budget for Parks Department development and maintenance of off-leash areas and for Animal Control staffing and enforcement efforts.

Adopted by the City Council of the City of Seattle this \_\_\_\_ day of

\_\_\_\_\_, 1997, and signed by me in open session in authentication of its adoption this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 1997.

\_\_\_\_\_  
President \_\_\_\_\_ of the City Council

Filed by me this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 1997.

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City Clerk

THE MAYOR CONCURRING:

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Norman B. Rice, Mayor

BJG:rlh

Permanent Dogs-Off Leash Program

Parks and Recreation

September 30, 1997

(Ver.3)